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PREFACE

A preface to a little book with a voluminous introduction of some hundreds of pages seems a superfluous luxury. I believe, however, that such a preface is intended to give to a superficial reader a brief indication of what he may expect to find in the book. The scholar requires none of it. In order, therefore, to satisfy such a reader, I will tell him briefly that I am publishing here for the first time a Samaritan collection of Biblical legends, a parallel to the Jewish Midrash and to the pseudepigraphic literature. I claim for the "Secrets of Moses" that it is the oldest book in existence of this kind of literature, and I put the date of its compilation to be about the middle or end of the third century B. C. E. In the introduction the reader will see how I have reached a conclusion as startling to me as probably it will be to him who will take this book for the first time into his hands. It was very slow and uphill work, and I had to cover a wide field, leaving no document unexamined which might help to throw light on the date and origin of this book. I have searched through the entire pseud-epigraphic literature, in whatever language it may have been preserved, and I have worked my way up to the Hellenistic literature, to the Sibylline Oracles and Eupolemos. Josephus has attracted me quite specially, and I believe I have been able to put a new complexion on the character and sources of his "Antiquities." The Palestinian Targum has come under minute examination, and in connection with it all the Jewish Midrashim. The Sibylline Oracles have been traced down to their latest development in the Tiburtine, and the mediaeval oracles down to Matthew of Paris, and even to Slavonic and Rumanian texts. In my re-examination of the pseud-epigraphic literature I have arrived at conclusions which differ widely from those accepted today. I have

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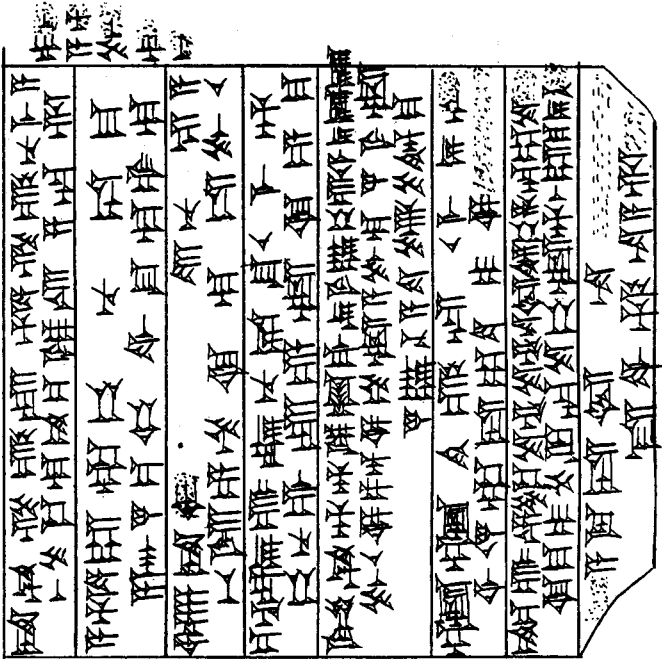
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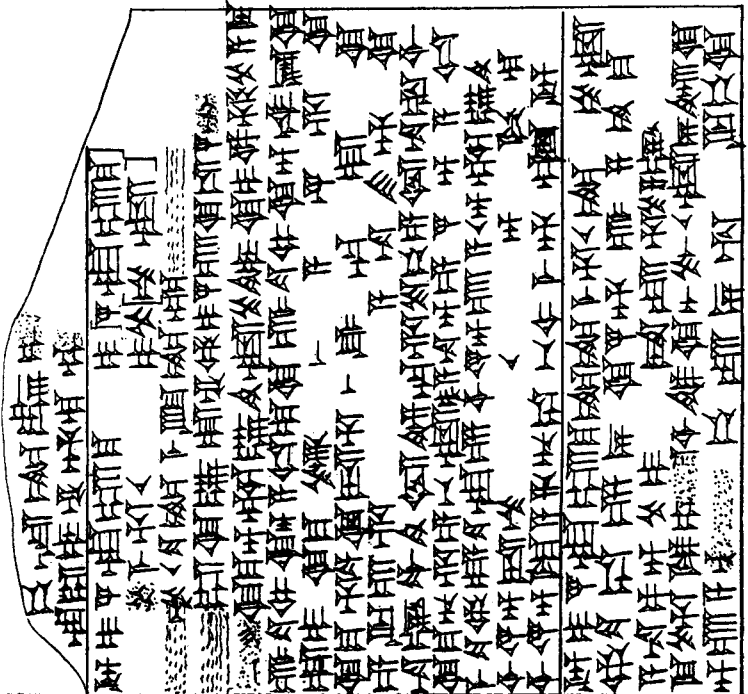
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To Binder.

This plate should face p. 535. It was accidentally omitted from the July Number.